

ADOPTED



North Pender Island Local Trust Committee Minutes of Special Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2015 (10:30 am)
Pender Islands Community Hall

Location: 4418 Bedwell Harbour Road, North Pender Island, BC

Members Present: Dianne Barber, Local Trustee
Derek Masselink, Local Trustee

Staff Present: Justine Starke, Island Planner
Zorah Staar, Recorder
Lori Foster, Planning Team Assistant

Regrets: George Grams, Chair
Gary Holman, MLA Saanich North and the Islands

Public and Media Present: There were approximately 35 members of the public present

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:38 am, by Trustee Masselink as Acting Chair. He welcomed everyone to this workshop on age friendly (senior friendly) community planning. This also benefitted other ages, and the sustainability of our community.

Planner Starke said that the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee (LTC) initiated this project in the last term and it was advanced through a grant from the Union of BC Municipalities. She commented that the LTC has the authority to make land use decisions such as improving parking standards in the Land Use Bylaw or requiring more accessibility be included in the guidelines of the Official Community Plan. Ultimately, an age friendly plan will need to be implemented in partnership with a number of agencies and that is a major objective of this project.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

3. AGE FRIENDLY PENDER COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Capital Regional District (CRD) Director, David Howe of the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area was present and confirmed his support for age friendly island communities. He introduced Judy Brownoff. She is a CRD Director, Saanich Councillor, and a regional and national expert in this field.

3.1. Age Friendly Presentations

3.1.1. Judy Brownoff, Saanich Councillor, CRD Director

Judy Brownoff made comments on topics including the following:

- The importance of celebrating and empowering all individuals as they age, and also valuing the many contributions of older people to our communities;
- Saanich has specific policies and bylaws (e.g. an adaptable housing bylaw) to support seniors to live in their communities as long as possible;
- Examples: age-friendly housing, parks, resting benches, community gardens, centres to cook and eat together (which were also teen centres), and with many initiatives having an inter-generational aspect, and also being free;
- Fire Department teaches fire or fall prevention, police teach abuse prevention;
- Ministry of Health funding obtained to support a hub for aging plan;
- Each Saanich Department had an age friendly lens, and age friendly planning was built into the Official Community Plan, bylaws, budget and work plans, because this supported meaningful initiatives and action to occur.

3.1.2. James van Hemert, Consultant for the Age Friendly Plan

James van Hemert said that today was for listening to people's concerns and ideas, on 8 potential themes for an age friendly community here, including:

- Housing ;
- Community support and health services;
- Transportation (including parking);
- Outdoor spaces and buildings (accessibility);
- Respect and social inclusion (i.e. inter-generational);
- Social participation (events, activity centres);
- Communication and information (geared to seniors);
- Civic participation and employment (options need to be known).

James van Hemert also noted the following:

- North Pender median age was 58.3 years (higher than BC median by 16 years), with a population bulge at age 60 to 64 years;
- Project objectives for the North Pender age friendly community included addressing above themes with appropriate Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw changes, and also creating partnerships with relevant agencies and community groups;
- After today, there would be more workshops and consultation opportunities, and ongoing community feedback was invited (e.g. by an available survey).

3.2. Age Friendly Theme Presentations

3.2.1. Mobility - Niall Parker of Moving Around Pender (MAP) Alternative Transportation Society

Niall Parker of Moving Around Pender made comments including the following:

- MAP was dedicated to decreasing the amount of car use on Pender, and supporting greater mobility for all, including seniors;
- Car Stops program was available for Seniors not able to drive;
- Community Bus proposal being developed (by Andrea Mills and others);
- Re: difficulty of walking on main roads here, Magic Ferry Route and also other transportation trails being worked on (e.g. from Community Hall to Library);
- Walking or bike trail use also supported better health, for everyone.

3.2.2. Housing - Wendy MacDonald, Plum Tree Court/Pender Senior's Society

Wendy MacDonald of Plum Tree Court made comments including the following:

- She was President of the non-profit Pender Islands seniors Housing Society, which community members set up to create Plum Tree Court in mid-80's;
- Plum Tree Court had 6 housing units (670 and 700+ square feet), and was located just past Health Care Centre, towards bridge to South Pender;
- BC Housing subsidized initial mortgage and ongoing rents for Plum Tree, so residents only paid rent equal to 30% of their annual income;
- Residents had to be 55+ or younger with a disability, able to live independently, eligibility was limited to moderate income/assets, and there was a waiting list.

3.2.3. Community Support and Health - Andrea Mills, Community Support Staff

Andrea Mills, Community Support Worker, commented as follows:

- Services already happening here included community nurses for health care, home care workers, Meals on Wheels, Maintain Your Independence exercise classes, volunteer drivers, a visiting program, and more;
- Now Pender Health Care Society had received funding for a new "Better At Home Program" (to add non-medical services to help more Seniors stay in their homes, e.g. cleaning, shopping, yard work, house maintenance, etc.);
- Better At Home was just being set up, and Andrea invited feedback (e.g. at meeting after this one today) on what else would be beneficial here.

3.3. Conversations - Part 1

3.3.1. Cafe Style Conversations at Each Table - Making the Penders More Age Friendly

The consultant, James van Hemert, invited each table to use the available adhesive sheets of coloured paper to write out their individual answers to the following question:

“What is the most important thing or things that need to happen, so that I can live out my days happily and healthfully on Pender Island?”

A number of lively conversations ensued, at approximately 7 different tables.

3.4. Friendly Lunch (provided to all participants, from approximately 11:45 to 12:30)

3.5. Conversations - Part 2

3.5.1. Cafe Style Conversations at Each Table - Making the Penders More Age Friendly

Then, James van Hemert invited each table to clump their sheets of “most important things” that they’d discussed, under the themes he’d described earlier (see 3.1.2), and to add their personal top 3 answers to the question at 3.3.1 above (if not listed yet). This was to begin to see priorities, and also connections.

3.6. Reporting Out by Table

James van Hemert invited each table to send a representative to the front, to report on their answers to the question at 3.3.1, and have their “clumps” of comments posted on large sheets of paper for each of the 8 potential themes for creating an Age Friendly Community here. Below are summary notes from the verbal reporting, ranked by the themes appearing to involve the most comments:

3.6.1. Housing

- Housing needed to be affordable, and include both renting or owning options;
- A diversity of housing types was desired, and it needed to be adaptable;
- Having opportunities to “age in place” was preferred by many, but not by all (e.g. some folks wanted to live closer together, in smaller dwellings);
- Supported to change zoning to allow secondary suites or cottages, either that seniors could live in, or that they could rent out to younger tenants (e.g. for a reduced rent if tenants were providing services or support for senior to stay);
- Housing options involving cooperation and sharing were supported, e.g. co-housing, or seniors pods with separate living space but shared kitchen/dining;
- Good to use existing housing wherever possible (instead of building new), and also not take away housing needed for younger folks and families;
- Supported to expand Plum Tree Court if possible;

- Seniors housing should be concentrated and near services if possible, and then service delivery and transportation are much easier (see 3.6.2 below);
- In order to stay in their own homes, people need various support services as they age e.g. cleaning, yard work, maintenance (3.6.3 below);
- Supported for Pender to provide supports so that our older folks could stay in their homes as long as possible, and continue to be part of our community.

3.6.2. Transportation

- Considered to be another critical issue, for seniors to be able to age in place, and stay on Pender as long as possible;
- For seniors not driving, we need a community bus with a flexible schedule for on-island transportation, and also networked with off-island transportation;
- Transportation particularly important for attending medical/other appointments;
- HandyDART/buses supported as well, easier if housing concentrated;
- Transportation to be affordable and accessible (e.g. for people still driving, cost of gas here was prohibitive, as well as cost of food for some);
- General cost of living here, plus cost of ferries, people go off-island for affordable gas and groceries, were both huge problems for seniors wanting to stay;
- Night driving road safety was an issue, with narrow winding roads and faintly painted lines or no lines;
- Finding flat trails and paths to walk and cycle on was difficult, and also finding safe trails, paths and roads – because of narrow roads and fast driving;
- Seniors wanted to walk and cycle more, stay active, but find this difficult here.

3.6.3. Community Support & Health Services

- Strongly expressed need was to have doctors on-island so that seniors could have a local General Practitioner with continuity of care, and not have to leave;
- Both on and off-island, help needed to get to appointments (e.g. specialists);
- Medical care here should be as accessible as possible (e.g. to get quick appointments), and suggested to be able to do more tests and scans here;
- There should be more home medical support after operations or illness;
- There should be increased availability of home care support, an expanded community support network, and also additional services for seniors to age in place (i.e. new Better At Home Program highly supported);

- Seniors need help to find good non-profit and private company services to provide non-medical support services as well (e.g. cleaning, cooking, shopping, yard maintenance, house maintenance, and more);
- Holes were too big in our social safety net, i.e. seniors could slip through cracks and not receive support services that they really needed to stay here;
- Needed to be better offline and online information systems so that both new seniors and folks already here could find out regularly about support and other services available to them at present time (because things were always changing – see also 3.6.7 below).

3.6.4. Social Participation

- Very important to have seniors be able to get out and do things together, like walking, swimming, and cooking together;
- This was to connect socially, and also stay active, physically and mentally (including stretching our minds, kept us learning and growing together);
- Also important for these activities to connect seniors with other age groups.

3.6.5. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Finding flat trails and paths to walk and cycle on was difficult, and also finding safe trails, paths and roads – because of narrow roads and fast driving.

3.6.6. Respect & Social Inclusion

- No comments made today about a lack of respect or social inclusion for seniors on Pender generally;
- This was suggested to be because a lot of key Pender events and groups involved seniors and a mixing of generations, and because seniors were almost a majority here and therefore received greater respect.

3.6.7. Communication & Information

- Needed to be better offline and online information systems so that both new seniors and folks already here could find out regularly about support and other services available to them at present time;
- Some seniors were computer literate and had email, but many did not and still need to be reached by traditional means.

3.6.8. Civic Participation & Employment

No specific comment, although need to keep stretching our minds was noted.

3.7. **Closing Remarks**

3.7.1. James van Hemert, Planning Consultant

James van Hemert thanked everyone for their very helpful comments, and said that there would be more workshops and opportunities for comment in future.

In addition, there was a survey distributed today, which all interested seniors were invited to complete and return, or do online. The link to the survey can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KHSVXZ8>

3.7.2. Justine Starke, Planner, Islands Trust

Planner Starke passed closing comments to A/Chair Masselink.

A/Chair Masselink said that in order to go forward with creating a more age friendly community, we needed to invest in initiatives like the ones suggested *above*. This would build a stronger, more sustainable community for all ages (e.g. through increasing services to seniors, which then provided jobs and develop our island economy). In addition to partnerships, perhaps we needed a Task Force to go forward with this work.

In addition to developing necessary services for seniors, it was also noted that we should keep remembering all that seniors provide to our community – with their services, purchases, volunteering, wisdom, connections with others, and much more.

4. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting was adjourned at 1:28 pm.

Derek Masselink, Acting Chair

Certified Correct:

Zorah Staar, Recorder